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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 000183

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [KPAO](#) [KDEM](#) [IR](#) [SW](#)  
SUBJECT: SWEDEN - INFO ON IRAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY  
PROGRAMMING

REF: STATE 2659

Classified By: Political Counselor Casey Christensen, reason 1.4 (b) & (d)

[¶1.](#) (C) On February 15, Poloffs met with Dag Juhlin-Dannfelt, Deputy Director at the MFA Middle East and North Africa Department, to discuss Sweden's efforts to promote civil society and democracy in Iran. Per reftel, Poloffs shared information on U.S. democratization efforts in Iran. Ulf Lindell, Deputy Director at the MFA Disarmament and Non-proliferation Division, and Niklas Wiberg, Desk officer at the MFA Global Security Department, attended the meeting.

[¶2.](#) (C) Dannfelt said promotion of democracy, and human rights, has long been, and will continue to be, a mainstay of Sweden's engagement with Iran. He noted the Government of Sweden:

-- funds human rights training by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian (RWI) law for Iranians. The RWI, he said, throughout the year conducts human rights training that draws individuals from all over the Middle East. There are usually two to three Iranians in each course.

-- sponsors student exchanges, notably through a program with the University of Tehran. Through study in Sweden, a number (unspecified) of Iranian students obtain exposure to "Western Values" each year.

-- through its embassy in Tehran, engages the Government of Iran directly on human rights concerns. The Embassy additionally maintains contact with human rights activists within Iran.

-- through its embassy in Tehran, sponsors cultural programs.

-- through the MFA in Stockholm, discusses human rights and democracy concerns with Iranian diplomats in Sweden. For example, on February 14 MFA Political Director Olof Skoog met with the Iranian Ambassador and expressed, inter alia, Sweden's opprobrium for the Iran-hosted Holocaust Conference. Skoog additionally delivered a "very strong" message underscoring the need for Iran's full compliance with UNSCR [¶1737](#).

-- includes Iran within the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) activities for the Middle East and North Africa region.

-- officially meets with Shirin Ebadi -- Iranian human rights activist and 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner -- when she visits Sweden. Dannfelt said the Foreign Minister has met with her on past visits to Sweden.

[¶3.](#) (C) Dannfelt believes Ahmedinejad is increasingly

disinclined to allow EU members states engage with civil society in Iran, out of fear that such efforts are intended to foster "regime change." The Government of Iran harbors strong fears that Western outreach efforts mask hidden agendas, he said. He stressed the need for discreet engagement.

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